

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

Meeting Between The President and  
Chairman Khrushchev in Vienna.  
SUBJECT:

DATE: June 4, 1961  
10:15 A.M.  
Soviet Embassy  
Vienna

US

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
The Secretary  
Ambassador Bohlen  
Ambassador Thompson  
EUR - Mr. Kohler  
D - Mr. Akalovsky,  
(interpreting)

COPIES TO:

The White House

The Secretary  
Mr. Kohler

Permanent record copy for the Executive Secretariat's  
conference file

USSR

Chairman Khrushchev  
Foreign Minister Gromyko  
Mr. Dobrynin, Chief,  
American Countries Division,  
USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Ambassador Menshikov.  
Mr. Sukhodrev, Interpreter,  
USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs

During the exchange of amenities, the President asked Mr. Khrushchev what part of the USSR he was from. Mr. Khrushchev replied that he had been born in Russia, in a village in the vicinity of Kursk, 7 or 10 kilometers from the Ukrainian border, but that he had spent the early part of his life in the Ukraine. In this connection, he mentioned that recently very large deposits of iron ore had been found near Kursk. The deposits already prospected are estimated at 30 billion tons. The general estimate of these particular deposits is about 300 billion tons. Mr. Khrushchev said that according to US official statistics total deposits of iron ore in the US are estimated at 5 billion tons. Thus, he said, Soviet deposits will be sufficient to cover the needs of the entire world for a long time to come.

The President observed that he wondered why then the Soviet Union was interested in Laos.

Mr. Khrushchev said that the Soviet Union was not interested in Laos, but that it was the US which had created the Laotian situation.

The President said that he was not sure whether Mr. Khrushchev and himself could reach agreement on all the items under discussion,

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discussion, but he appreciated the frankness and precision with which the positions had been stated. Yet he believed that agreement could be reached on the question of Laos. Yesterday, both sides had agreed that Laos was of no strategic importance and was not vital to either side. However, the United States became involved in Laos by treaty and other commitments. The President said that his interest was to secure a cease-fire and to stop the fighting. This, he thought, would be in the interest of both sides. Then a government could be secured which would not be weighted in either direction. The President referred to the remarks made yesterday regarding the situation in Burma and Cambodia, which appeared to be satisfactory to both sides, and said that agreement on Laos should be possible along the same lines. However, the first problem is to stop the fighting. In our view military activities are still going on in some areas of Laos. We have information that Viet Minh forces are involved, while Mr. Khrushchev said that Thais were involved. If the Co-Chairmen of the Conference were to instruct jointly the ICC to make a determination as to the actual situation, the ICC should go to both sides and make its investigation. The President then referred to Mr. Khrushchev's statement yesterday in which he took issue with what he called the Dulles policy of strength. The President said he wanted to change US policy in this area because Laos was of no strategic importance. In the eyes of the world, both sides are involved in the Laotian situation; the United States wishes to reduce its involvement and hopes that the Soviet Union wishes the same. However, the President continued, as President he has certain responsibilities and if he changes US policy he must see that it works. The United States also wants to secure a government which both sides could support. If the situation can be changed, and Mr. Khrushchev said yesterday that it should be changed, then we could proceed with other matters. Laos is not so important as to get us as involved as we are.

Mr. Khrushchev said that he agreed with the President's concluding remark. The Soviet Union has no commitment in Laos, has never undertaken any obligations in that area, and will not do so in the future. If the Soviet Union has helped Laos it has been only at the request of Souvanna Phouma, who represents the only legitimate Laotian Government. That Government was ousted by external forces supported by the US. This is why the Soviet Union cannot recognize any other government. The Soviet Union has no vested interest in Laos, either political or economic, or of any other nature. That country is far from Soviet borders. In general the Soviet Union has no desire of committing itself or assuming responsibilities in the various geographic areas. So when the President says that the United States has commitments, this makes a bad impression upon the USSR. The US has no right to distribute indulgences, as it were, and to interfere in the

various

various areas of the world. Mr. Khrushchev said he liked the concluding part of the President's remarks to the effect that the two countries should not get involved. This is a correct approach but it would be bad if the United States were to attempt to claim special rights on the grounds that it had vested interests. If the President would pardon the blunt expression, such policy stems from megalomania, from delusions of grandeur. The United States is so rich and powerful that it believes it has special rights and can afford not to recognize the rights of others. The Soviet Union cannot reconcile itself with such a situation and will not concede its own rights. The Soviet Union will also help other peoples obtain their independence. This is a correct policy. If we want to normalize the situation and prevent conflicts between our two countries anywhere in the world, the US should not seek any special rights. The Soviet Union cannot accept the thesis of "don't poke your nose" because wherever the rights of the people are infringed upon, the Soviet Union will render assistance to the people. This, of course, aggravates the situation and the Soviet Union does not wish such a development. The situation should be normalized. The US should respect the rights of other peoples, the Soviet people as well as other peoples. The Soviet Union does not wish to divide the world. It has no commitment anywhere other than toward the Socialist countries. On the other hand, the United States has spread its forces all over. But time has changed. As the President has stated, the forces of the two sides are now in balance. Mr. Khrushchev said that he was making this statement not for the purpose of argument but only to recognize this fact. A great deal of restraint is required because the factors of prestige and national interests are involved here. We should not step on each other's toes and should not infringe upon the rights of other nations, small or big.

The President said that, frankly speaking, he had assumed office on January 20th and that the obligations and commitments had been undertaken before that time. Why these obligations and commitments were undertaken and what factors were involved at that time is not an issue here. The United States and the USSR should adopt the policy of creating a neutral and independent Laos. This is what the United States wants to do. The President reiterated that he did not want to increase US commitments but rather decrease them. There is no point in raking over past history to which Mr. Khrushchev objects. There are some facts in past history to which the United States also objects. But this is not an issue here. What is an issue here, is how to secure a cease-fire and to have the fighting stop. The United States wishes a government in Laos which would not be involved either with the United States or with the USSR, but would rather be genuinely neutral. The US went to the Conference with the genuine expectation

that

that arrangements could be made to ensure an effective verification of the cease-fire and that the next step would be the creation of a truly neutral Laos. The United States does not believe that there is an effective cease-fire in Laos. But whatever the facts of past history we should now act in such a way as to pursue the policy of ensuring a truly neutral and independent Laos, which we believe is also Soviet policy.

Mr. Khrushchev replied that he could subscribe to everything the President had said and that he fully associated himself with the President's remarks, which he liked very much. However, there was one point he wanted to make. The President had said that the Laotian situation was a legacy, but one could see in that situation the President's own hand as well. The President had ordered that US military advisers in Laos should wear US military uniforms; he had also ordered a landing of Marines in Laos but the order had been rescinded.

The President interjected that there had been no order for a landing of Marines. True, there had been some speculation as to what action the US would take, but such an order had never been issued. Mr. Khrushchev responded by saying that he was referring to press reports.

Mr. Khrushchev went on to say that the President's argument would be that all these commitments had been made by the previous administration. However, the Soviet Government has rescinded all the unreasonable decisions made by the previous governments under Malenkov and Bulganin. Mr. Khrushchev recalled the argument he had had with Molotov on the Austrian problem. As a result of his having overruled Molotov, a satisfactory solution of the problem was found and the US and the USSR signed the Austrian Treaty. Mr. Khrushchev said that he was sensitive with regard to US commitments. He said that the Westerners were much better than the Easterners at making threats in a refined way. Every once in a while it is intimated that Marines might be used. But as engineers know the law of physics says that every action causes counter-action. So if the United States were to send Marines, other countries might respond with their Marines or with some other forces. Thus another Korea or an even worse situation might result. Mr. Khrushchev repeated that he liked the President's statement because it reflected the Soviet policy; in fact, the President seemed to have stated the Soviet policy and called it his own. The Soviet Union could guarantee that it would exert every effort to achieve a settlement. But this depends not merely on our two countries but on the three forces in Laos as well. Agreement between our two countries would be insufficient. However, we should influence the Laotian forces

so that

so that a truly neutral government could be established. Mr. Khrushchev said that he believed that the United States had no economic interest in Laos. The President had mentioned yesterday US strategic interests in connection with Taiwan. But this, as was mentioned yesterday, could mean that United States could also take over Crimea because that would of course improve its strategic position too. Here the policies of the USSR and the US are not only contrast but even in direct conflict. Such policy should be cast away and a reasonable policy should be adopted. In any event, the two Foreign Ministers could discuss the details of the Laotian question. They should be locked in a room and told to find a solution.

Mr. Gromyko interjected that the Palais des Nations in Geneva was a big place with a lot of rooms.

The President said that he wanted to make a comment on Mr. Khrushchev's statement regarding uniformed US personnel in Laos. He said that this action was taken when representatives of the Soviet Union and the UK were discussing in Moscow the question of effecting a cease fire in Laos. When it became evident that no progress had been made the action was taken in order to prevent the situation from deteriorating further and to ensure a more favorable situation in which the conference could proceed. This is the kind of thing that happens when both sides are involved, and the United States would wish to avoid such developments.

Mr. Khrushchev then suggested that the questions of disarmament, nuclear tests and Germany be discussed now because otherwise there would be not enough time to do it.

The President replied that he wanted to make a final comment on the Laotian situation. He said that he was anxious to get the US military out of Laos. He had not supported and had been even reluctant to consider a landing of Marines, because he recognized that such action would entail retaliation and counter-action and thus peace in that area might be endangered. What he wanted to see in that area was an effective cease-fire and a peaceful settlement. He said perhaps Mr. Khrushchev could use his influence on Gromyko to persuade him to cooperate in bringing about an effective cease-fire in Laos and let the ICC verify the cease-fire in an effective manner. That was the basis on which the United States had agreed to come to the conference. The President then suggested that perhaps the Secretary and Gromyko could discuss this question during lunch.

Mr. Khrushchev said he could add little to what had already been said. He agreed that a cease-fire should be sought. However, other questions should not be delayed by lack of a

cease-fire.

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cease-fire. The point is that the situation at front lines is always unstable and even a shot fired accidentally by a soldier could be regarded by the other side as a violation of the cease-fire. Therefore, other questions should not be made contingent upon a cease-fire. However, the President should not misunderstand this position. The USSR believes that the question of a cease-fire should be handled on a priority basis, but the basic question is to bring about agreement among the three forces in Laos, so that the formation of a truly neutral government could be secured. Mr. Khrushchev agreed that no normal conditions for settlement would exist in the absence of a cease-fire. However, he was not aware of any fighting going on; if the United States had contrary information, it should be verified.

Mr. Gromyko remarked that the ICC was already in Laos and that it could act by agreement of both sides. In response to an inquiry by the Secretary, Mr. Gromyko clarified that what he meant by both sides were the two sides fighting in Laos. The ICC should not be granted the rights of a supragovernment.

The President reiterated his hope that the Secretary and Mr. Gromyko could discuss this problem briefly during lunch.

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Mr. Khrushchev then addressed himself/the question of nuclear weapon tests. He said he would not go into any details because the positions of the two sides were well known. Furthermore, he was not familiar with all the details of this intricate problem. However, there were two basic questions: (1) the number of suspicious events to be inspected and (2) organization of control. The Soviet Union cannot accept such controls as have been suggested so far. The events in the Congo taught the Soviet Union a lesson. Before those events the Soviet Union might have signed a treaty like the one suggested. However, the events in the Congo indicated that the UN appears to be able to act against the interests of individual states. The Congo had invited UN troops and those troops acted against the interests of the Congolese Government. So if there is a single chairman of the control commission (Mr. Khrushchev was obviously referring to the administrator) he will be able to set the policy. The US would not agree to having a Communist chairman and that is understandable. If it did then the Soviet Union could accept a single chairman (administrator). But the Soviet Union cannot accept a neutral chairman; after all, Hammarskjold is also neutral and an intelligent one at that. He is not the worst neutral possible. One should try to imagine a situation, Mr. Khrushchev said, where he, as Prime Minister of the Soviet Union, would have to subject his actions to such a commission (administrator). The people of the Soviet Union would never accept such a situation and if the United States wants him to be fired then it

should

should pursue this line. The Soviet Union does not seek control over the control organization but it does not wish the United States to have such control either. This is why the USSR has proposed a three-man body. Such an arrangement would not be prejudicial to any of the sides. Mr. Khrushchev said that he believed that the work of other international organizations should be organized along the same lines. He said that the United States was now in the majority in the UN, but times may change -- one cannot say when -- and the US may find itself in a minority. The UN is not a parliament, it is an international organization and the majority rule has no place there. Each group of countries should be equally represented, so that a balance of forces be established and that no one be able to pursue a policy prejudicial to any other side. Referring to the number of inspections, Mr. Khrushchev said that three inspections a year would be sufficient. A larger number would be tantamount to intelligence, something the Soviet Union cannot accept. Mr. Khrushchev then said that he wanted to link the question of nuclear tests with disarmament. If agreement could be reached on disarmament, then the USSR could agree to any controls and it would then drop the troika arrangement and the requirement for unanimity. The Soviet position on disarmament is well known; it was stated at the UN and the USSR still proceeds on that basis. Under the conditions of general and complete disarmament control must be most extensive so that no country could arm itself clandestinely. If there were general and complete disarmament there would be no question of espionage because there would be no armaments. Then there would be no secrets and all doors must be open so that complete verification could be ensured. This would include nuclear plants. In view of the fact that apparently no agreement can be reached on the question of nuclear tests, this question should be linked to disarmament. The disarmament group should combine the two questions and work out a general plan. Given good will, two years should be sufficient to develop an agreement on general and complete disarmament. Mr. Khrushchev said that he could give the President an aide memoire setting forth the Soviet position on this question. (The aide memoire was received from the Soviets after the meeting.)

The President said that he wanted to ask Mr. Khrushchev whether he believed it to be impossible to find any person that would be neutral both to the US and the USSR.

Mr. Khrushchev replied in the affirmative.

The President then said that the result of the Soviet proposal could be compared to a situation where if he were living in this room and Mr. Khrushchev in the adjacent room, they could not go to each other's rooms without the consent of the occupant.

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Under such conditions, how could any of the two be certain that nothing suspicious is going on in his neighbor's room. The President then said that a treaty along such lines could not be confirmed by the Senate. In sending any treaty to the Senate the President would have to give assurance that the treaty provides if not for a fool-proof control system, at least for a reasonable deterrent against violations. However, if the Soviet proposal were accepted, no such assurance could be given. Likewise, how could Mr. Khrushchev give such assurance to those people in his country who may think that the United States is testing clandestinely. True, Mr. Khrushchev is in an advantageous position because of the open way in which the United States acts.

Mr. Khrushchev smiled and said: "But what about Allen Dulles? Isn't that secret?" The President replied he wished it were. Furthermore, the President continued, how can we inspect events in the Soviet Union if any such inspection would be subject to Soviet approval? Under such an arrangement any party that might have tested clandestinely would simply refuse to accept inspection in the area where the test had occurred.

Mr. Khrushchev referred to his statement about three inspections a year to verify suspicious events and also noted that the President had failed to address himself to his statement regarding the dropping of the troika proposal if nuclear tests were linked with disarmament. If this arrangement were adopted, then full control could be exercised any time and at any place. Mr. Khrushchev went on to say that a nuclear test ban alone would not be very important to the national security of the people. The danger of war would remain, because the production of nuclear energy, rockets, and bombs would continue full blast. What people want is peace. Therefore, agreement should be reached on general and complete disarmament. Then the troika would be dropped and the USSR would subscribe to any controls developed by the US, even without looking at the document.

The President said that he agreed that a nuclear test ban would not of itself lessen the number of nuclear weapons possessed by the USSR and the US. Nor would it reduce the production of such weapons. However, a test ban would make development of nuclear weapons by other countries less likely, although, of course, no one can guess what will happen in the future. At this time, the United States and the USSR possess great stocks of nuclear weapons; Great Britain possesses certain quantities of such weapons and France is also getting some capability. If we fail to reach agreement on a nuclear test ban then other countries will undoubtedly launch a nuclear weapons program. While a nuclear test ban would be no certain guarantee against the

proliferation

proliferation of nuclear weapons, it would certainly impede such proliferation. If no agreement is reached, then in a few years there might be ten or even fifteen nuclear powers. So in considering this question of what Mr. Khrushchev calls espionage one should balance its risks against the risks involved in the proliferation of nuclear weapons. If we are successful in reaching agreement on a nuclear test ban then it will certainly at least put a brake on the spread of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Khrushchev agreed that there was some logic in the President's position and said that this was why the Soviet Union had entered the negotiations. However, practice has demonstrated that this logic is not quite correct because while the three powers are negotiating in Geneva, France simply spits at them and goes on testing. Thus if there is no link between a nuclear test ban and disarmament other countries may say that they are in an unequal position and might act like France. Other countries may say that if the great powers possess stockpiles of nuclear weapons they should also acquire such stockpiles. On the other hand, if there were disarmament, then nuclear weapons would be eliminated and other countries would be in an equal position and would not have to spend money on the development of nuclear weapons. General and complete disarmament is the most radical means of preventing war. The Soviet Union has always regarded the question of a nuclear test ban merely as a small step toward general and complete disarmament. But let us now begin with the main issue and include the test ban in it.

The President said he agreed that a test ban would not be a basic part, but it would be a most important part. He said that the treaty as drafted now provides for abrogation of the treaty if any country associated with any party to the treaty should conduct tests. The United States does not support French testing. We hope that once a treaty has been concluded most other countries will join in it. The question of a nuclear test ban is a relatively easy problem to resolve because the controls required are based on scientific instrumentation, such as seismographs, etc. So why not start with this relatively easy question. The President then inquired whether the Soviet conception was that if we used the term general and complete disarmament -- or general and comprehensive disarmament as used by us last year -- the process would be carried out step by step with the necessary parallel inspection. Or is it the Soviet view that we would simply announce that goal as an objective of national policy and countries would carry out inspection on their own.

Mr. Khrushchev

Mr. Khrushchev replied he wanted to make a complaint: The President apparently had not read the Soviet proposals with sufficient attention. Otherwise, he would know that the Soviet proposals provide for disarmament in stages and for control in stages.

The President then inquired whether this was to be understood that, if both sides accepted general and complete disarmament and agreed to reduce their armed forces, the number of their aircraft or submarines, or to disarm outer space, the Soviet Union would accept inspection any place in the USSR.

Mr. Khrushchev replied in the affirmative, using the word "absolutely".

In other words, the President inquired further, if general and complete disarmament were accepted as a commitment of national policy and a nuclear test ban were included in the first stage, would that mean that the test ban would be subject to inspection without a veto?

Mr. Khrushchev replied that in that event he would try to persuade the President not to start with this measure because it is not the most important one.

In response to the President's question what should come first, Mr. Khrushchev replied that any other measure would be acceptable, such as, for instance, prohibition of nuclear weapons, prohibition of the manufacture of such weapons, or elimination of military and missile bases. (At this point Mr. Gromyko corrected the interpreter saying that Mr. Khrushchev had not mentioned prohibition of the manufacture of nuclear weapons. However, Mr. Khrushchev confirmed that he had mentioned this item.) The Soviet proposals on disarmament contain all the details and there is logic in those proposals. The proposals also provide for complete control. In any event, both sides should try to reach agreement on the priority of individual measures so that neither side would have its interests prejudiced by the other.

The President said that Mr. Khrushchev appeared to feel that a link should be established between a nuclear test ban and disarmament and that these two questions are inter-related and should be discussed together. We, on the other hand, believe that a nuclear test ban would be if not the most important step, at least a very significant step and would facilitate a disarmament agreement. There is a Chinese proverb saying that a thousand-mile journey begins with one step. So let us make that step.

Mr. Khrushchev

Mr. Khrushchev rejoined by saying that the President apparently knew the Chinese very well but that he too knew them quite well. To this the President replied that Mr. Khrushchev might get to know them even better. Mr. Khrushchev retorted that he already knew them very well.

Referring to the President's statement about the significance of a nuclear test ban, Mr. Khrushchev said that the USSR could agree to a nuclear test ban provided it was subject to the troika arrangement.

The President then said that it appeared to him that the conversation was back where it had started. Therefore, he wanted to conclude this discussion by saying that the United States is greatly concerned by the uninspected moratorium that has been going on for three years in connection with the negotiations. This indicates how long it takes to reach agreements. The prospect of an indefinite continuance of a moratorium without controls is a matter of great concern to the United States. Therefore, it is difficult to envisage how the question of nuclear tests could be included in disarmament negotiations, which we hope will be successful but which will probably require a long time. Perhaps it would be best to go back to Geneva to make another effort and to see what each of us should do in this matter. Perhaps then the conference might be recessed or some other action taken. Whether or not there is agreement on nuclear tests we would start our discussions on disarmament on June 19.

Mr. Khrushchev replied that he was agreeable to conducting negotiations in Geneva and said that there was a Soviet representative there. However, the Soviet Union could not accept such controls as would be tantamount to espionage if weapons themselves were not eliminated. This, in effect, is what the Pentagon has wanted all along. Eisenhower's open skies proposal in 1955 was a part of that scheme. Now ground posts are envisaged and this is also reconnaissance. The Soviet Union has agreed to negotiate on a nuclear test ban in the hope of reaching agreement and proceeding to general and complete disarmament. If the US refuses to accept general and complete disarmament then the Soviet Union cannot agree to accept such an arrangement. The Soviet Union cannot accept a situation where controls would prejudice its national security and where the Soviet Government would be subject to the will of a third party and would not be free to act on its own.

The President said that it was obvious that if controls should turn out to be prejudicial to the national interest of any of the parties to an unreasonable degree, the treaty could be abrogated. The President reiterated that we would begin our

discussions

discussions on disarmament on June 19, which will be in effect a continuation of the discussions Mr. Gromyko and Mr. Stevenson had had in New York.

Mr. Khrushchev inquired whether the President would agree to tie together the question of the test ban and disarmament.

The President replied that he would not unless there was assurance that agreement on disarmament could be reached speedily. He referred to the fact that negotiations on a nuclear test ban had been in process for three years. The President emphasized that the problem of espionage mentioned by Mr. Khrushchev paled if compared with the problems which would result from the development of nuclear capabilities by other countries. This is bound to affect the national security of our two countries, and increase the danger of major conflicts.

Mr. Khrushchev said that if we agreed on general and complete disarmament that problem would not only pale but would completely disappear.

Turning to the question of Germany, Mr. Khrushchev said that he wanted to set forth his position. He said that he understands that this will affect the relations between our two countries to a great extent and even more so if the US were to misunderstand the Soviet position. Conversely, if US understood the Soviet position correctly our two countries would be brought closer together rather than be divided. Sixteen years have passed since World War II. The USSR lost 20 million people in that war and many of its areas were devastated. Now Germany, the country which unleashed World War II, has again acquired military power and has assumed a predominant position in NATO. Its generals hold high offices in that organization. This constitutes a threat of World War III which would be even more devastating than World War II. The USSR believes that a line should be drawn under World War II. There is no explanation why there is no peace treaty 16 years after the war. This is why the USSR has suggested that a peace conference be convened. In this connection, the USSR proceeds from the actual state of affairs, namely, that two German States exist. Our own wishes or efforts notwithstanding, a united Germany is not practical because the Germans themselves do not want it. No delay in the matter of signing a peace treaty is justifiable and only West German militarists gain from such a delay. A peace treaty would not prejudice the interests of the US, the UK, or France; on the contrary, these interests would be best served by a peace treaty. The present situation looks as if the US opposes a peace treaty while the USSR wants it. Mr. Khrushchev said that he wanted the

President

President to understand him correctly. He would like to reach agreement with the President -- and he said he wanted to emphasize the words "with you" -- on this question. If the US should fail to understand this desire the USSR will sign a peace treaty alone. The USSR will sign a peace treaty with the GDR and with the FRG if the latter so desires. If not, a peace treaty will be signed with the GDR alone. Then the state of war will cease and all commitments stemming from Germany's surrender will become invalid. This would include all institutions, occupation rights, and access to Berlin, including the corridors. A free city of West Berlin will be established and there will be no blockade or interference in the internal affairs of the city. West Berlin should have a clearly defined status. If the US desires, guarantees could be given to ensure non-interference and the city's ties with the outside world. If the US wants to leave its troops in West Berlin, that would be acceptable under certain conditions; however, the Soviet Union believes that in that case Soviet troops should be there too. Likewise, the USSR would be agreeable to having neutral troops stationed in Berlin. UN guarantees would be acceptable as well. The USSR would be prepared to join the US in ensuring all the conditions necessary for preserving what the West calls West Berlin's freedom. However, if the US rejects this proposal -- and the USSR will regard such an action as having been made under the pressure of Adenauer -- the USSR will sign a peace treaty unilaterally and all rights of access to Berlin will expire because the state of war will cease to exist.

The President said that first of all he wanted to express his appreciation of the fact that Mr. Khrushchev had set forth his views in such a frank manner. At the same time the discussion here is not only about the legal situation but also about the practical facts which affect very much our national security. Here, we are not talking about Laos. This matter is of greatest concern to the US. We are in Berlin not because of someone's sufferance. We fought our way <sup>there</sup>, although our casualties may have been not as high as USSR's. We are in Berlin not by agreement of East Germans but by contractual rights. This is an area where every President of the US since World War II has been committed by treaty and other contractual rights and where every President has reaffirmed his faithfulness to his obligations. If we were expelled from that area and if we accepted the loss of our rights no one would have any confidence in US commitments and pledges. US national security is involved in this matter because if we were to accept the Soviet proposal US commitments would be regarded as a mere scrap of paper. West Europe is vital to our national security and we have supported it in two wars. If we were to leave West Berlin Europe would be

abandoned

abandoned as well. So when we are talking about West Berlin we are also talking about West Europe. The President said he would like to see the relations between our two countries develop in a favorable direction so that some arrangement could be found. Mr. Khrushchev seems to agree that the ratios of power today are equal. Therefore, it is difficult to understand why a country with high achievements in such areas as outer space and economic progress should now suggest that we leave an area where we have vital interests.

Mr. Khrushchev interjected that he understood this to mean that the President did not want a peace treaty. He said that the President's statement about US national security could mean that the US might wish to go to Moscow because that too would, of course, improve its position.

The President replied that the US was not asking to go anywhere; we were not talking about the US going to Moscow or of the USSR going to New York. What we are talking about is that we are in Berlin and have been there for 15 years. We suggest that we stay there.

The President continued by saying that the US was interested in maintaining its position in Berlin and its rights of access to that city. He said he recognized that the situation there is not a satisfactory one; he also recognized that in the conversations Mr. Khrushchev had had with former President Eisenhower the term "abnormal" had been used to describe that situation. However, because conditions in many areas of the world are not satisfactory today it is not the right time now to change the situation in Berlin and the balance in general. The United States does not wish to effect such a change. The US is not asking the USSR to change its position but it is simply saying that it should not seek to change our position and thus disturb the balance of power. If this balance should change the situation in West Europe as a whole would change and this would be a most serious blow to the US. Mr. Khrushchev would not accept similar loss and we cannot accept it either. The question is not that of a peace treaty with East Germany but rather of other aspects of this proposal which would affect our access to Berlin and our rights there.

Mr. Khrushchev

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Mr. Khrushchev said that he was sorry that he had met with no understanding of the Soviet position. The US is unwilling to normalize the situation in the most dangerous spot in the world. The USSR wants to perform an operation on this sore spot -- to eliminate this thorn, this ulcer -- without prejudicing the interests of any side, but rather to the satisfaction of all peoples of the world. It wants to do that not by intrigue or threat but by solemnly signing a peace treaty. Now the President says that this action is directed against the interests of the US. Such statement is difficult to understand indeed. No change in existing boundaries is proposed; a peace treaty would only formalize them. The USSR wants a peace treaty because such a treaty would impede those people who want a new war. Revanchists in West Germany will find in a peace treaty a barrier impeding their activities. Today they say that boundaries should be changed. But if a peace treaty is signed there will be no ground for revision of the boundaries. Hitler spoke of Germany's need for Lebensraum, to the Urals. Now Hitler's generals, who had helped him/designs to execute his plans, - are high commanders in NATO. This logic cannot be understood and USSR cannot accept it. Mr. Khrushchev said he was very sorry but he had to assure the President that no force in the world would prevent the USSR from signing a peace treaty. 16 years have passed since World War II and how long should the signing of a peace treaty be delayed? Another 16 years, another 30 years? No further delay is possible or necessary. As far as US losses in the last war are concerned, losses are difficult to measure. Loss of a drop of blood equals the loss of a pint of blood in the minds of those who shed that blood. The US lost thousands and the USSR lost millions, but American mothers mourn their sons just as deeply as Soviet mothers shed tears over the loss of their beloved ones. Mr. Khrushchev said that he himself had lost a son in the last war; Mr. Gromyko lost two brothers, and Mikoyan a son. There is not a single family in the USSR or the leadership of the USSR that did not lose at least one of its members in the war. Mr. Khrushchev continued by saying that he wanted the US to understand correctly the Soviet position. This position is advanced not for the purpose of kindling passions or increasing tensions. The objective is just the opposite -- to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of development of our relations and to normalize relations throughout the world. The USSR will sign a peace treaty and the sovereignty of the GDR will be observed. Any violation of that sovereignty will be regarded by the USSR as an act of open aggression against a peace-loving country, with all the consequences ensuing therefrom.

The President inquired whether such a peace treaty would block access to Berlin. Mr. Khrushchev said that it would.

The President

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The President then said that the US is opposed to a buildup in West Germany that would constitute a threat to the Soviet Union. The decision to sign a peace treaty is a serious one and the USSR should consider it in the light of its national interests. Referring to the question of boundaries, the President said that General de Gaulle had made a statement on this question. This problem has been discussed in the Western world and there is some division of opinion on this matter. However, the US is committed to the defense of Western Europe and has assisted Western Europe in the past. The President said that one of his brothers had been killed in the last war, when the US came to Western Europe's assistance. If the US were driven out of West Berlin by unilateral action, and if we were deprived of our contractual rights by East Germany, then no one would believe the US now or in the future. US commitments would be regarded as a mere scrap of paper. The world situation today is that of change and no one can predict what the evolution will be in such areas as Asia or Africa. Yet what Mr. Khrushchev suggests is to bring about a basic change in the situation overnight and deny us our rights which we share with the other two Western countries. This presents us with a most serious challenge and no one can foresee how serious the consequences might be. The President said it had not been his wish to come here to Vienna to find out not only that a peace treaty would be signed but also that we would be denied our position in West Berlin and our access to that city. In fact, the President said, he had come here in the hope that relations between our two countries could be improved. The President stressed he hoped that Mr. Khrushchev would consider his responsibility toward his country and also consider the responsibility the President of the United States has toward his people. What is discussed here is not only West Berlin; we are talking here about Western Europe and the United States as well.

Mr. Khrushchev replied that he could not understand the President's reference to Western Europe. The USSR does not wish any change; it merely wants to formalize the situation which has resulted from World War II. The fact is that West Germany is in the Western group of nations and the USSR recognizes this. East Germany is an ally of the socialist countries and this should be recognized as a fait accompli. East Germany has now demarcation lines and these lines should become borders. The Polish and Czech borders should be formalized. The position of the GDR should be normalized and her sovereignty ensured. To do all this it is necessary to eliminate the occupation rights in West Berlin. No such rights should exist there. It would be impossible to imagine a situation where the USSR would have signed a peace treaty with the US retaining occupation rights, which are based on the state of war. The US may say that its blood was shed, but the USSR shed blood too and not water.

The President

The President interjected that our rights were based on a four-power agreement. Mr. Khrushchev replied that this was so in the absence of a peace treaty, but said that a peace treaty would end the state of war and those rights would therefore expire.

The President said this meant unilateral abrogation of the four-power agreement by the USSR and emphasized that the US could not accept such an act. Mr. Khrushchev replied that this was not so because the USSR would invite the US to sign a peace treaty and would sign it alone only if the US should refuse to do so. In that event the US could not maintain its rights on the territory of the GDR. The President again referred to the four-power agreement, but Mr. Khrushchev replied that the USSR considered all of Berlin to be GDR territory. The President stated this may be Soviet view but not ours. If the USSR transfers its rights, that is a matter for its own decision; however, it is an altogether different matter for the USSR to give our rights which we have on contractual basis. He said that the USSR could not break the agreement and give US rights to the GDR. Mr. Khrushchev rejoined by saying that this was a familiar point of view but had no juridical foundation, since the war had ended 16 years ago. In fact, President Roosevelt indicated that troops could be withdrawn after two or two and a half years.

Mr. Khrushchev continued by saying that all the USSR wants is a peace treaty. He could not understand why the US wants Berlin. Does the US want to unleash a war from there? The President as a naval officer and he himself, a civilian although he participated in two wars, know very well that Berlin has no military significance. The President speaks of rights, but what are those rights? They stem from war. If the state of war ends, the rights end too. If a peace treaty is signed US prestige will not be involved, and everybody will understand this. But if the US should maintain its rights after the signing of a peace treaty, that would be a violation of East Germany's sovereignty and of the sovereignty of the socialist camp as a whole. Mr. Khrushchev recalled that President Eisenhower had agreed that the situation in Germany was abnormal. Eisenhower had said that US prestige was involved. Then the possibility of an interim agreement was discussed, an arrangement that would not involve the prestige of our two countries. Perhaps this could serve as a basis for agreement. The USSR is prepared to accept such an arrangement even now. Adenauer says that he wants unification but this is not so. As far as unification is concerned, we should say that the two German governments should meet and decide the question of reunification. A time limit of say 6 months should be set and if there is no agreement we can disavow our responsibilities and then anyone would be free to

conclude

conclude a peace treaty. This would be a way out and it would resolve this question of prestige, which, Mr. Khrushchev said, he did not really understand. Mr. Khrushchev said that he had hoped that Eisenhower would agree subsequently at the Summit, but the forces which are against improvement of relations between the US and USSR sent the U-2 plane and the USSR decided that in view of the tensions prevailing as a result of that flight this question should not be raised. However, the USSR believes that time for such action is ripe now. Mr. Khrushchev expressed regret on his own behalf and on behalf of his colleagues and allies at not having found understanding on the President's part of the Soviet Union's good intentions and motivations. If only the German question were resolved the road would be clear for the development of our mutual relations. The USSR does not want to infringe upon anybody's interests, but neither would it concede its own interests. Mr. Khrushchev said he believed that the US does not want territorial gains although there is ideological disagreement between the US and the USSR. However, ideological disagreements should not be transferred onto the plane of a devastating war. He said that he was confident that people would be reasonable enough not to act like crusaders in the Middle Ages and would not start cutting each other's throats for ideological reasons. If the United States disagrees with the Soviet proposal it should at least understand the Soviet position. The USSR can no longer delay. It will probably sign a peace treaty at the end of the year, with all the ensuing consequences, i.e., all obligations will come to an end. The status of West Berlin as a free city will be guaranteed and complete non-interference will be ensured. West Berlin will be accessible to all countries with which it will want to maintain ties. However, access will be subject to GDR's control, since communication lines go through its territory. If the US is concerned about what it calls freedom of West Berlin, let us develop guarantees jointly or invite the UN. No nation will understand the US position of perpetuating the state of war with Germany. The USSR will explain its position to the world. It wants to prevent the possibility of war. If the US refuses to sign a peace treaty, the USSR will have no way out other than to sign such a treaty alone. The USSR lost 20 million people in the last war while the US lost 350 thousand.

The President interjected that this was why the US wanted to prevent another war.

Mr. Khrushchev continued by saying that if the US should start a war over Berlin there was nothing the USSR could do about it. However, it would have to be the US to start the war, while the USSR will be defending peace. History will be the judge of our actions. The West has been saying that Khrushchev might

miscalculate.

miscalculate. But ours is a joint account and each of us must see that there is no miscalculation. If the US wants to start a war over Germany let it be so; perhaps the USSR should sign a peace treaty right away and get over with it. This is what the Pentagon has been wanting. However, Adenauer and Macmillan know very well what war means. If there is any madman who wants war, he should be put in a straight jacket. Nations close to USSR territory know what war will mean for them. The USSR thinks of peace, of friendship, and it is happy with its trade relations with West Germany, France, Great Britain and Italy. It is not by accident that trade between the US and the USSR is still frozen but that is a problem for the US. So this is the Soviet position. The USSR will sign a peace treaty at the end of this year. Mr. Khrushchev concluded by saying that he was confident that common sense would win and peace will prevail.

The President said he recognized that the situation in Germany was abnormal. Germany is divided today. When President Roosevelt talked about the withdrawal of troops he was not able to foresee this situation or the fact that our two countries would be on different sides. The US does not want to precipitate a crisis; it is Mr. Khrushchev who wants to do so by seeking a change in the existing situation. The President then said the US was committed to this area long before he had assumed a position of high government responsibility. Now Mr. Khrushchev suggests a peace treaty at the end of the year, which would deny our rights in that city and our rights of access. Mr. Khrushchev knows very well that Berlin is much more than a city and yet he makes such a suggestion. Is that a way to secure peace?

Mr. Khrushchev replied he did not understand how the signing of a peace treaty could worsen the world situation. Peace is always regarded as something beneficial while the state of war is regarded as something evil.

The President said that the signing of a peace treaty is not a belligerent act. He had not indicated this at all. However, a peace treaty denying us our contractual rights is a belligerent act. The matter of a peace treaty with East Germany is a matter for Mr. Khrushchev's judgment and is not a belligerent act. What is a belligerent act is transfer of our rights to East Germany. West Berlin is not important as a springboard. However, the US is committed to that area and it is so regarded by all the world. If we accepted Mr. Khrushchev's suggestion the world would lose confidence in the US and would not regard it as a serious country. It is an important strategic matter that the world believe the US is a serious country.

Mr. Khrushchev

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Mr. Khrushchev wondered what he should do in these circumstances. He said he believed that US intentions led to nothing good. The USSR would never, under any conditions, accept US rights in West Berlin after a peace treaty had been signed. He said he was absolutely convinced that the peoples of the world would understand such a position. Moreover, the US had deprived the USSR unilaterally of its rights and interests in West Germany, it had deprived the USSR of reparations in West Germany, and it had signed a unilateral peace treaty with Japan. As a result of this latter action the Soviet Union still has no peace treaty with Japan.

The President interjected that Mr. Khrushchev had said to President Eisenhower that he would have signed the treaty. Mr. Khrushchev confirmed this, while Mr. Gromyko said that the fact remained that the US had signed the Japanese peace treaty without the Soviet Union.

Mr. Khrushchev went on to say that the US regarded all this as appropriate, but now it says what the USSR wants to do is immoral. The USSR would like to do it together with the US, but if the US refuses to sign a peace treaty the USSR will do it alone. East Germany will obtain complete sovereignty and all obligations resulting from German surrender will be anulled. The factor of the USSR's prestige should be taken into account. What the US wants is to retain the rights gained after World War II even after a peace treaty had been signed. This is a policy of "I do what I want". The USSR regards East Germany as a completely sovereign state and it will sign a peace treaty with it. Responsibility for violation of that sovereignty will be heavy.

The President said that there is every evidence that our position in Berlin is strongly supported by the people there, and we are committed to that area. Mr. Khrushchev says that we are for a state of war. This is incorrect. It would be well if relations between East Germany and West Germany improved and if the development of US-USSR relations were such as to permit solution of the whole German problem. During his stay in office, Mr. Khrushchev has seen many changes, and changes will go on. But now he wants a peace treaty in six months, an action which would drive us out of Berlin.

Mr.  
Khrushchev had said that the President was a young man, but, the President continued, he had not assumed office to accept arrangements totally inimical to US interests. The President said he

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was prepared to discuss any problem but Mr. Khrushchev should take into account our interests just as he says we should take into account his views.

Mr. Khrushchev said that then an interim agreement should be concluded. However, no matter how long a time limit such an agreement were to provide for, the Germans would not agree because no one wishes reunification. An interim agreement would be a formal factor, it would give the semblance of the responsibility for the problem having been turned over to the Germans themselves. If the US does not wish such an arrangement there is no other way but to sign a peace treaty unilaterally. No one can force the US to sign a peace treaty but neither can the US make the Soviet Union accept its claims. Mr. Khrushchev then said that an aide-memoire on the Berlin question had been prepared so that the US could study the Soviet position and perhaps return to this question at a later date, if it wished to do so.

The group then moved to the dining room for lunch.